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Chairman: Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 105: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/49/16 (part II), A/49/34, A/49/98, A/49/336, A/49/418, A/49/471 and A/49/560; A/C.5/49/1)

1. Mrs. MASKEY (Nepal) said that the delegation of Nepal welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat (A/49/336) and his efforts to establish an integrated Department of Administration and Management, to restructure the political and humanitarian sectors of the Organization, and to integrate the social and economic dimensions of development. In the latter area, a positive impact on programme delivery was to be hoped for.

2. Nepal also supported the initiative to establish a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility by January 1995, as described in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/49/1). The proposed system of accountability provided managers with the means of doing their jobs and could also be used to measure their performance. It must operate at every level of the Secretariat if it was to change the Organization's management culture. Since the system must win the support of all staff members, the efforts of the Secretariat to develop a "motivation culture" based on rewards and sanctions were welcome. It was important, however, for the proposed personnel evaluation system to ensure impartial performance appraisal. The plan for further training of all staff members in financial and administrative matters was also welcome.

3. Independent internal oversight mechanisms were essential to the effectiveness of the new system of accountability. The delegation of Nepal therefore commended the work done by the Office for Inspections and Investigations and the establishment of the new Office of Internal Oversight Services, which must be provided with increased financial and human resources. It also endorsed the recommendations for improving oversight functions made by the Board of Auditors contained in the note by the Secretary-General (A/49/471). It agreed that the Board's finances should be put on the same basis as those of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

4. In its report (A/49/418) the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts established pursuant to resolution 48/218 A made recommendations for dealing with the alleged fraud and irregularities in the United Nations. The recommendations, especially the ones on preventive action and prompt punishment of guilty parties, merited support.

5. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that his delegation always supported any initiative to make the United Nations more efficient, but the management culture and staff attitudes, motivation and working habits could not be changed overnight. The objectives of the restructuring should be clearly worked out and the process completed within a set time-frame. Excessive delay would produce instability and an adverse effect on staff morale. The commitment of Member States was essential to the success of the undertaking.

6. Bangladesh supported the principle of decentralization and looked forward to the Secretary-General's proposals in that area. But authority must be commensurate with responsibility, and a balance must therefore be struck between decentralization and delegation of authority, on the one hand, and central monitoring and control of resources, on the other. It was important to have efficient oversight machinery to monitor the restructuring, and continual guidance by Member States would also be prudent. Member States expected the highest standards in all the areas under discussion. It was therefore essential to establish accountability at all levels and to ensure transparency in programme activities, especially by means of international competitive bidding and contract evaluation. Furthermore, recruitment policy and procedures must produce equitable geographical representation in the Organization.

7. The restructuring must be carried out in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly, and there must be consultation with Member States and intergovernmental bodies. Regrettably, some big changes had been made in the structure of the Secretariat without such consultation. It should also be noted that the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) had an essential role to play. Finally, his delegation endorsed the comments of the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), particularly with regard to oversight machinery and the involvement of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) in the Board's review process.

8. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) said that the Tunisian delegation welcomed the restructuring of the United Nations and improvement of its efficiency. However, the changes were not ends in themselves but rather means of ensuring a better response to the new demands. Time constraints had made it difficult for the Secretary-General to submit an analysis of the programme implications of the restructuring, but several departments had been reorganized, in particular the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, and a substantial improvement had been made in the planning and management of field operations. It should be noted, however, that financial difficulties might obstruct the launch of future operations.

9. The Tunisian delegation noted the frank acknowledgement of the difficulties connected with the transfer of the support structures for economic activities to Geneva. It was sure that everything would be done to remove those difficulties and to implement the trade and development programmes.

10. The establishment of the Office for Inspections and Investigations was welcome, for such services could only enhance the Organization's activities. It was in that belief that Tunisia had joined in the consensus on resolution 48/218 B.

11. Tunisia had always supported the development of Nairobi as a United Nations headquarters city. Some of the measures taken in 1993 were welcome, but the operating rules for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) required further clarification, especially in the context of the new management culture. It endorsed the Secretary-General's comments about closer collaboration between

UNEP and Habitat contained in paragraph 170 of his restructuring report. The positive tone of the discussion of the United Nations Office at Vienna was also welcome, in particular the indication that other activities might be transferred to Vienna.

12. The establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility was an excellent move, and the useful recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts warranted positive consideration.

13. Mr. WANG Xhexian (China) noted that the restructuring of the Secretariat had been made necessary by the numerous new challenges being faced by the United Nations, and by the increase in the Secretariat's workload as a result of changes in the world situation. His delegation noted with appreciation that, as part of the restructuring exercise, the Secretary-General had decided to set up three departments in the political and humanitarian sectors and three in the economic and social sectors, thus demonstrating his view that the Organization should approach its objectives in respect of economic and social cooperation and development with the same sense of responsibility and urgency as its commitments in the political and security area. It was to be hoped that the six departments would be treated equally in terms of resources, thus enabling them to make major contributions to the economic and social development of developing countries.

14. While the Secretary-General's decision to set up a department specifically geared to providing support and services to developing countries in the fields of management, institution building and human resources development was both necessary and in conformity with the requests of developing countries, the Chinese delegation regretted that, in the course of restructuring, the scope of the functions of that department had shrunk and that its resources, both human and financial, were woefully inadequate. It was to be hoped that the Secretary-General would take prompt measures to resolve that problem to enable the department to perform its functions effectively for the benefit of the social and economic development of developing countries.

15. As the Secretary-General himself had pointed out, the task of Secretariat reform was an ongoing one in which periods of reform must alternate with periods of consolidation. The reform and restructuring of the Secretariat had been in progress for more than two years and the time had come for appropriate consolidation, with no further major structural changes being made in the near future. That would reassure the staff of the Secretariat and improve their morale, and would also enable the Member States to make a comprehensive evaluation of what had been achieved.

16. The Chinese delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to establish an effective and transparent system of accountability and responsibility for programme managers but pointed out that the establishment of such a system was a means rather than an end, the ultimate purpose being to ensure that the staff of the Secretariat conscientiously acted in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, implemented the decisions of the General Assembly and served the Member States to the best of their ability.

The newly established Office of Internal Oversight Services would assist in ensuring satisfactory performance of duties by all the Secretariat staff.

17. However sound the institutional and working arrangements might be, the United Nations could not work effectively without a stable financial basis; the Chinese delegation therefore called on all Member States to endeavour to pay their assessments on time and in full. In particular, those major contributors that were in arrears should show political good will and pay their arrears as soon as possible in order to assist the Organization to resolve its current financial difficulties. In the future, the United Nations should act within its means, especially in peace-keeping operations, and pay particular attention to the true effectiveness of each operation and to the ability of Member States to bear the burden of such activities.

18. Mr. DEIR (Myanmar) commended the Secretary-General for his prompt response to the General Assembly's request for the establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility and urged him to expedite the revision of reference texts, including the Organization Manual, the code of conduct, the Personnel Manual, the Financial Rules, the Field Administration Handbook, and related procedural manuals. The ready availability of those texts would greatly facilitate the transparency of the Organization, an element which could not be overemphasized.

19. For its part, the delegation of authority in the form of empowerment to utilize human and material resources, expend financial resources, and make the decisions required to deliver mandated outputs should be commensurate with the attribution of responsibility and accountability.

20. Over the years, the United Nations had lacked an effective system of deterrents against potential wrongdoers among its personnel. Now more than ever, the system of reward for good conduct and performance and punishment for dereliction of duty, incompetence and the wilful infringement of rules and regulations had become indispensable. In rewriting the formal United Nations code of conduct, the Secretariat should solicit suggestions from all other appropriate United Nations institutions, including the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. The revised code should be applicable not only to international civil servants but also to those serving in peace-keeping operations. The revision should also encompass the problems of fraud and other criminal activities.

21. His delegation endorsed the report and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts contained in document A/49/418. It also welcomed the candid report of the Office of Inspections and Investigations contained in document A/49/449. The lack of resources to enable the Office to function effectively was, however, a cause of concern and the current state of affairs should be rectified as a matter of the highest priority.

22. With regard to the consideration of a jurisdictional and procedural mechanism for addressing alleged cases of fraud in the United Nations, all necessary care should be taken to avoid further proliferation of subsidiary

bodies and the concomitant duplication of functions and waste of funds. Consideration should therefore be given to expanding the areas of competence of existing mechanisms, such as the Administrative Tribunal of the United Nations and the Joint Disciplinary Committee, to enable them to cope with the additional problems under discussion. Provision should also be made for transferring appropriate cases, where necessary, to the national courts of Member States, especially those of which the staff member was a national and/or in whose territory the wrong had been committed. Apart from purely civil cases, it might be necessary to resort to national courts for criminal offences. It was essential to ensure that anyone accused of gross misconduct enjoyed the rights of due process, adequate defence and appeal.

23. The United Nations could not resolve the kind of new and unprecedented problems it was facing with rigid staff rules and regulations which did not lend themselves to a continuous process of review and revision. Although amendments to rules and regulations might be necessary, they were not sufficient to prevent malfeasance and misappropriations. Periodic reorientation seminars to instil fresh motivation and the proper attitude in staff members would also be required to achieve the desired management culture within the Organization.

24. Mr. WORONIECKI (Poland) said that there was a direct link between the disciplined payment of assessed contributions and the efficiency of the use of resources by the Organization. That link should not become a vicious circle which jeopardized the implementation of the objectives of the Organization. Equally important was the need to ensure that the demands of programmes were matched by the resources to implement them.

25. The report on the establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility (A/C.5/49/1*), together with the subsidiary reports contained in documents A/49/301, A/49/310 and A/49/449, augured well for improvements in the frequently criticized management culture of the Organization. His delegation welcomed the political will which the Secretariat had shown in introducing the new system. Any system of managerial accountability and responsibility, however, must be complemented by the clear delegation of authority both at Headquarters and in the field.

26. Success in fostering a new management culture throughout the system depended on such factors as effective decentralization and enhanced accountability at all levels; transparency and flexibility in delineating mandates for the use of resources; improvement in the quality of human resources through implementation of the new performance appraisal system, training and retraining, rewarding or penalizing staff members, and giving managers greater authority to hire and fire. In forging the new management culture, it must be remembered that people determined the success or failure of any management reform. Clearly, the United Nations could not simply copy the practices of the private sector, although some of them might possibly be adapted to the United Nations context. The question was how to make United Nations managers manage and not simply administer their programmes.

27. The efficient functioning of the Organization was affected not only by endogenous factors but also by exogenous ones, especially the guidance which the Secretariat received from Member States. While it was easy to subject the Secretariat to otherwise well-deserved criticism, it was less popular for Member States to engage in self-crit'cism with respect to the coherence, clarity and self-sustainability of the mandates they approved and the reports they requested of the Secretariat. Member States should refrain from demanding the impossible from the Organization unless they were prepared to make the necessary resources available to it.

28. New accountability procedures should not overburden the Organization and thereby hinder actual programme delivery. An appropriate balance must be struck between the need for controlling and monitoring by the central administration and the delegation of authority and responsibility to managers for the implementation of programmes and use of resources. Moreover, the current structure of the intergovernmental machinery often did not reflect current priorities. For example, human rights and humanitarian affairs, including emergency assistance, ranked low among the Organization's priorities. Organs responsible for programming, budgeting and system-wide coordination also needed to interact more effectively in order to expedite the work of the Fifth Committee and other bodies.

29. The new system of accountability should facilitate redeployment of resources to new or higher priority activities. What had to be decided was the extent to which decisions should be left to programme managers and what the prerogatives of intergovernmental bodies should be.

30. Poland fully supported the recommendation contained in document A/49/301 that the medium-term plan should be the Organization's basic strategic document for four rather than six years. It was also crucial for the success of programming and management that the objectives and expected results of each subprogramme should be identified. Moreover, the number of subprogrammes should be drastically reduced in the interest of consolidation and the elimination of "dead wood". If those preconditions were met through the joint effort of Governments and the Secretariat, the new format might indeed enhance strategic planning, permit the establishment of a link between the objectives to be formulated and the allocation of resources among programmes, and allow for the evaluation of results.

31. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to maximize the cost-effectiveness of resources committed and to conduct a review in order to ascertain the extent to which further efficiency gains from cost-effective measures could be realized without any negative impact on the fulfilment of mandates. It also commended him on his selection of priorities and his intention to further strengthen the internal oversight functions of the Organization.

32. Internal controls were another prerequisite for the success of the proposed decentralization plan in which greater accountability and responsibility must accompany greater authority. The critical role of such controls in implanting

the new system resulted from the need to monitor the process and not merely to investigate and police the implementation of programmes. Close cooperation between internal and external oversight bodies represented the best available guarantee of effective controls within the Organization. Poland looked forward to greater transparency and a more coherent policy, including a more representative network of suppliers of the goods and services required for peace-keeping operations and other field missions. Indeed, contracting and procurement was one of a number of areas in which significant improvements were needed if the United Nations and its organizations were to secure better value for money.

33. A breakthrough in the efficiency of the functioning of the Organization would perhaps be the best gift which the Organization could offer both to its Members and to itself. On the eve of its fiftieth anniversary, it was crucial to improve the Organization's ability to cope with current and future strategic objectives and priorities. The establishment of an effective system of accountability and responsibility would contribute to the creation of the mission-driven and results-oriented Organization to which the world community as a whole aspired.

34. Mr. ORANGE (Belarus) said that the reform of the United Nations to improve the efficiency of its functioning had entered a qualitatively new stage. Without radical and consistent reforms the Organization would be unable to respond effectively to contemporary challenges or serve as a reliable tool for guaranteeing peace and security. But the United Nations was such a complex organization that the restructuring process had to address an organic unity consisting of many different components. As to the effectiveness of the changes for the Organization, only time would tell; but due consideration must be given to continuity as one of the most important elements of the restructuring. Furthermore, the reforms must not impose any undue strain on the already overburdened budget, and the restructuring must be linked to programme activities and their concrete results. In that regard the Secretary-General's restructuring report was somewhat vague, and, as noted at the thirty-fourth session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), the implementation of a number of programmes was threatened by various organizational and financial difficulties.

35. The establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility, with feedback between the Secretariat and Member States, was an extremely difficult task which could not be accomplished without a stronger oversight system. Accordingly, the action taken by the Organization to strengthen oversight operations amounted to a positive achievement in the enhancement of efficiency. But it was not sufficient simply to create new offices and units which would undoubtedly duplicate each other. The existing machinery must also be strengthened and adapted to the changes in the functioning of the United Nations. Accountability and responsibility could not be improved without the training and retraining of personnel. Decentralization and delegation of responsibility certainly opened up new possibilities but they must be accompanied by more stringent oversight at all levels.

36. Some delegations had rightly pointed to the need to give due attention to "risk zones" in the Organization's activities. The problems of peace-keeping operations constituted one such zone: the United Nations could avoid serious mistakes in the planning and conduct of the operations only by taking a comprehensive approach to them. His delegation could support any initiatives to enhance evaluation, control and forward-planning in peace-keeping operations. The establishment of an independent group of experts to review procurement procedures would be a timely and correct step.

AGENDA ITEM 104: FINANCIAL REPORTS AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, AND REPORTS OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS (A/48/516 and Add.1, A/48/572, A/48/587; A/49/5 (Vols. I-IV) and Add.1-9, A/49/214, A/49/348 and Add.1-2, A/49/368 and Corr.1 and A/49/547)

37. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) said that the financial statements and the conclusions of the Board of Auditors provided a basis for assessing the effectiveness with which the resources provided by Member States had been used by the organizations of the United Nations system. The activities of the Board of Auditors thus provided an essential mechanism for external financial and administrative control and helped to uncover cases of the misuse or negligent use of resources. Consequently, the Board's activities should be further enhanced.

38. It was encouraging to note that the Board had not confined itself to noting cases of the inappropriate expenditure of funds but had also recommended remedial measures. The shortcomings identified by the Board in such areas as budgetary expenditure, procurement and publishing were a cause of great concern.

39. In its report (A/49/214) the Board mentioned that it had received information concerning 74 cases of fraud or presumptive fraud involving a total of almost $2 million in nine organizations during 1992-1993. It was to be noted in that context that the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/218 A had indicated in its report (A/49/418) that the Secretariat gave an extremely narrow interpretation of the term "fraud". In the view of his delegation, the Secretariat, in considering the new mechanisms of internal control, should address that problem and find an adequate definition of the terms "fraud" or "presumptive fraud". It was surprising that the Secretariat did not regard fraud as including waste, abuse, property loss or misleading financial information. That being so, his delegation wondered how cases of unauthorized food purchases for unduly high prices, plundering of mission vehicles, apparent overpayments on fuel and many other facts revealed by the Board should be characterized.

40. His delegation welcomed the submission of separate reports on peace-keeping operations. The key problem identified by the Board of Auditors was the unhealthy situation with regard to procurement, about which many delegations, including his own, had been expressing serious concern for over 12 months. The apprehensions of Member States had been fully confirmed by the conclusions drawn by the Board. In general, his delegation supported the recommendations of the

Board for eliminating the shortcomings in that area and welcomed the measures apparently being taken by the Secretariat with a view to ensuring greater fairness, impartiality and transparency in the procurement process.

41. While generally supporting the Board's proposal for the involvement of high-level professionals in the procurement of goods and services for the United Nations, his delegation felt that care needed to be taken to avoid the obvious conflict of interest involved in recruiting to the Secretariat procurement units employees from the companies which were the suppliers of goods and services to the United Nations.

42. His delegation agreed with the Board's conclusions on the need to eradicate bureaucratic tendencies in the Committee on Contracts and to restructure its operations. Members of that Committee should be accountable for their decisions on contracts or procurement. Further attention should be given to the distribution of duties and functions between Headquarters and field missions in the area of procurement, including the financial allocations for procurement purposes and the list of goods and services dealt with by Headquarters or by the missions.

43. His delegation found the conclusions and recommendations of the Board of Auditors with respect to other areas of the Organization's activities to be extremely interesting and deserving of the Administration's attention, particularly those dealing with the publishing services, technical cooperation activities, staff costs and conference services. Also of interest were the Board's conclusions concerning cash management, especially the issue of maximizing interest earnings on idle cash resources.

44. In view of the importance of putting the Board's recommendations into effect, his delegation welcomed the importance attached to that matter both by the Board itself and by ACABQ, to which reference was made in paragraphs 34 to 36 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/49/547).

45. Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil) commended the quality of the reports prepared by the Board of Auditors and said that the recent establishment of the Office for Internal Oversight Services would further enhance the relationship between external and internal controls. His delegation welcomed the fact that, in accordance with resolution 47/211, a report containing the main findings and conclusions of the audits had been issued (A/49/214). The issuance of a separate report on peace-keeping operations was fully justified, particularly in view of the size of the peace-keeping budget.

46. Procurement was a source of concern for Member States, particularly since the large sums involved generated a substantial market for providers of goods and services from different Member States. However, the problems identified by the Board of Auditors were not restricted to peace-keeping operations but also affected expenditures under the regular budget and the programme of technical cooperation. The shortcomings identified in connection with peace-keeping operations were therefore part of a larger problem that stemmed largely from the fact that the Organization lacked a management culture designed to ensure

impartiality, transparency and open competition. His delegation particularly welcomed the establishment of an intergovernmental working group to analyse all aspects of the problem. The recommendations concerning procurement procedures should be endorsed by Member States. Few exceptions should be made to the rules governing bidding processes; where exceptions were absolutely necessary, the reasons justifying them should be provided and the manager responsible for the decision should be held accountable for it. In the view of his delegation, the main problem lay in the narrow range of suppliers, which, as the Advisory Committee had pointed out, created an environment in which it was unlikely that the best value for money could be obtained. Not only was the roster of suppliers limited but it was rarely updated, and suppliers were well aware that there would be no systematic quality control on the goods and services delivered to the Organization.

47. Remedial action to deal with those shortcomings might be conceived along the lines set forth in the Brazilian Constitution, which specified that government departments and agencies must give full publicity to all transactions involving the purchase of goods and services. In the United Nations, invitations to submit tenders should be widely advertised and rosters of suppliers and summaries of all contract reports circulated among Member States in much the same way as was done for vacancy announcements.

48. There was reason to believe that companies from developed countries were overrepresented in the list of suppliers. Considerations of equitable geographical distribution should not be stressed at the expense of the best value for money. It was widely known, however, that companies from developing countries occupied a sizeable share of the most competitive markets and they should not be prevented from supplying the United Nations where they were able to meet requirements concerning price, quality and timely delivery.

49. His delegation had noted the comments of ACABQ regarding the allocation of the work and resources of the Board of Auditors. His delegation was concerned, however, that frequent additional requests for auditing activities should not unduly impinge upon the Board's programme of work.

50. His delegation shared the view of the Board of Auditors concerning the terms of office of its members and agreed with the timetable suggested in document A/49/368 and its corrigendum.

51. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that the reports of the Board of Auditors were thought-provoking and underlined the need for proper follow-up of its recommendations on the Secretary-General's efforts to improve management efficiency. It was worrying that the Board had qualified its opinions on the financial statements of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), among others, and on peace-keeping operations. It was also worrying that there had been no proper physical inventory of property at Headquarters since 1987. Efficient procurement and inventory procedures were essential means of safeguarding the Organization's financial interests. The General Assembly adopted similar resolutions on the topic almost every year, but the situation did not change.

52. His delegation would welcome full implementation of the Board's recommendations on procurement practices. The proposed review of procurement policy and procedures by an independent group of experts was also welcome. The procurement of services, particularly consultants for peace-keeping, must be kept to a minimum. The Board rightly noted that in such procurement due regard had not always been paid to equitable geographical representation.

53. The United Nations played a critical role in ameliorating the political, economic and social situations in Member States. All Members should therefore remain committed to efficient management in the implementation of the Organization's mandates.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

54. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had received a communication from the President of the United Nations Staff Committee requesting access to address the Fifth Committee at the present session under agenda item 113. He had also received the communication from the President of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) requesting, on behalf of the Federation, access to address the Committee under agenda item 114.

55. In the light of developments in the composition of the staff representative body since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 35/213, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its subsidiary body, the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ), as well as the International Civil Service Commission, had allowed the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA) access on an equal basis to that granted to FICSA.

56. He therefore suggested that, in accordance with the practice of the Committee at previous sessions of the General Assembly, it might wish to invite the representatives of CCISUA and the representative of FICSA to make oral statements in connection with items 113 and 114.

57. It was so decided.

58. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico), speaking as the coordinator for agenda items 127 and 130, said that, during the informal consultations at the last session, the Secretariat had made available to the Committee additional budgetary information which had not been submitted to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. She had been asked to request the Chairman of the Fifth Committee to seek the views of the Chairman of ACABQ on the information provided, if possible at the next informal meeting.

59. The CHAIRMAN said that, as an exceptional measure and with the aim of facilitating a consensus, he would, if the Committee so wished, invite the Chairman of ACABQ to attend the next informal meeting, at which time he could discuss that Committee's recommendations in document A/49/501 in the light of the additional information provided by the Secretariat.

60. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.